

Our Hope

1 Corinthians 15:12-20

It looked like routine Saturday morning TV time at the Van Pelt household. Lucy and Linus were sitting in front of the television set when Lucy said to Linus, "Go get me a glass of water."

Linus looked surprised, "Why should I do anything for you? You never do anything for me."

"On you 75th birthday," Lucy promised, "I'll bake you a cake."

Linus got up, headed to the kitchen saying, "Life is more pleasant when you have something to look forward to."

What do you look forward to. In other words, do you have hope this morning? In what are you hoping?

Professional golfer Paul Azinger was diagnosed with cancer at age 33. He had just won a PGA championship and had ten tournament victories to his credit. He wrote, "A genuine feeling of fear came over me. I could die from cancer. Then another reality hit me even harder. I'm going to die eventually anyway, whether from cancer or something else. It's just a question of when. Everything I had accomplished in golf became meaningless to me. All I wanted to do was live."

Then he remembered something that Larry Moody, who teaches a Bible study on the tour, had said to him. "Zinger, we're not in the land of the living going to the land of the dying. We're in the land of the dying trying to get to the land of the living."

Azinger recovered with chemotherapy and returned to the PGA tour. He's done pretty well. He's earned nearly \$14.5 million in his career. But that bout with cancer deepened his perspective. He wrote, "I've made a lot of money since I've been on the tour, and I've won a lot of tournaments, but that happiness is always temporary. The only way you will ever have true contentment is in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I'm not saying that nothing ever bothers me and I don't have problems, but I feel like I've found the answer to the six-foot hole."

In what are you hoping this morning? And, along with that, what limits your hope? Today we are looking into a passage from Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth where we will discover that the believers there held to a "mixed bag" of hope. They believed that Christ had risen from the dead while holding out that no one else could do likewise. Paul writes them that holding such "hope" is no hope at all, in fact it is ...

Doubting the Resurrection (vv. 12-14)

Disbelieving the Witnesses (vv. 15-16), and...

Denying the Faith (vv. 17-20)

I. Body

A. Doubting the Resurrection (vv. 12-14)

a) **What does it mean to deny the future hope of resurrection?**

1. Some Jews (Saducees) denied the resurrection.

a) were these folks trying to be both Christian and Saducee?

2. Greeks believed in a resurrection of the spirit not a bodily resurrection

3. BUT, if these people continue in doubting a future resurrection, then...

a) Then Christ Didn't Rise

b) The Preaching of Christ is Empty

c) Believing on Christ is empty

(1) Not just the teaching on resurrection, but the whole of the religion is empty

(2) the TRUTH is denied and becomes absurd.

(3) 1 Cor. 15:17 -- And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!

B. Disbelieving the Witnesses (vv. 15-16)

a) **Would the eye witnesses to His resurrection have lied?**

1. They would have been misrepresenting God
2. They would, in fact, be testifying against God
3. The eye witnesses claimed that Jesus had arose
 - a) Hosea 6:2 -- After two days He will revive us;
On the third day He will raise us up,
That we may live in His sight
 - b) through their boldness
 - c) through their actions
 - d) through their own suffering and sacrifice
4. Fortunately, it wasn't like that on Resurrection Day, some two thousand years ago. It was more like ... June 18, 1815, the Battle of Waterloo. The French under the command of Napoleon were fighting the allied forces of the British, Dutch, and Germans under the command of Wellington. The people of England depended on a system of signals to find out how the battle was going. One of these signals was on the tower of Winchester Cathedral.
5. Late in the day it flashed the signal: "W - E - L - L - I - N - G - T - O - N - - - D - E - F - E - A - T - E - D - - - ." Just at that moment a fog cloud made it impossible to read the message. The news of defeat quickly spread throughout the city. The whole countryside was sad and gloomy when they heard the news that their country had lost the war. Suddenly, the fog lifted, and the remainder of the message could be read. The message had four words, not two. The complete message was: "W - E - L - L - I - N - G - T - O - N - - - D - E - F - E - A - T - E - D - - - T - H - E - - - E - N - E - M - Y!" It took only a few minutes for the good news to spread. Sorrow was turned into joy, defeat was turned into victory!
6. So it was when Jesus was laid in the tomb. Hope had died in the hearts of Jesus' most loyal friends. After the frightful crucifixion, the fog of disappointment and misunderstanding had crept in on the friends of Jesus. They had read only part of the message. "Christ defeated" was all they knew. But then on the third day the fog of disappointment and misunderstanding lifted, and the world received the complete message: "Christ defeated death!" Defeat was turned into victory; death was turned into life!

C. Denying the Faith (vv. 17-20)

a) **Christianity doesn't mix well with other religions**

1. What value, then, is your faith?

a) futility

b) still in your sins

(1) The futility expressed in vv. 32-34

(2) eat, drink and die

(3) In November of 1969, Peggy Lee recorded a song

that for some reason which escapes me still,

became very popular.

- “Is that all there is?
- Is that all there is?
- If that’s all there is, my friend,
- Then let’s keep dancing.
- Let’s break out the booze and have a ball,
- If that’s all there is.”

c) the dead are just dead

2. We are, of all creatures, most pitiable

II. Conclusion

A. To What do you hope?

1. some vague notion of eternal life? or
2. to live with Christ?
 - a) yes, life forever, but also new life in the "here and now"

B. Romans 4:25 -- who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

1. Jesus was on the cross because of sin
2. Jesus was raised to life for your "right standing" with God

C. Paul's claims

1. God IS
2. In God is Hope
3. Rom. 15:13 -- Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.